

# The Cold War

**R**etired Col. Anthony Martinez not only remembers the Cold War, he lived it. The former U-2 Dragon Lady pilot remembers the 1961 Cuban Missile Crisis well.

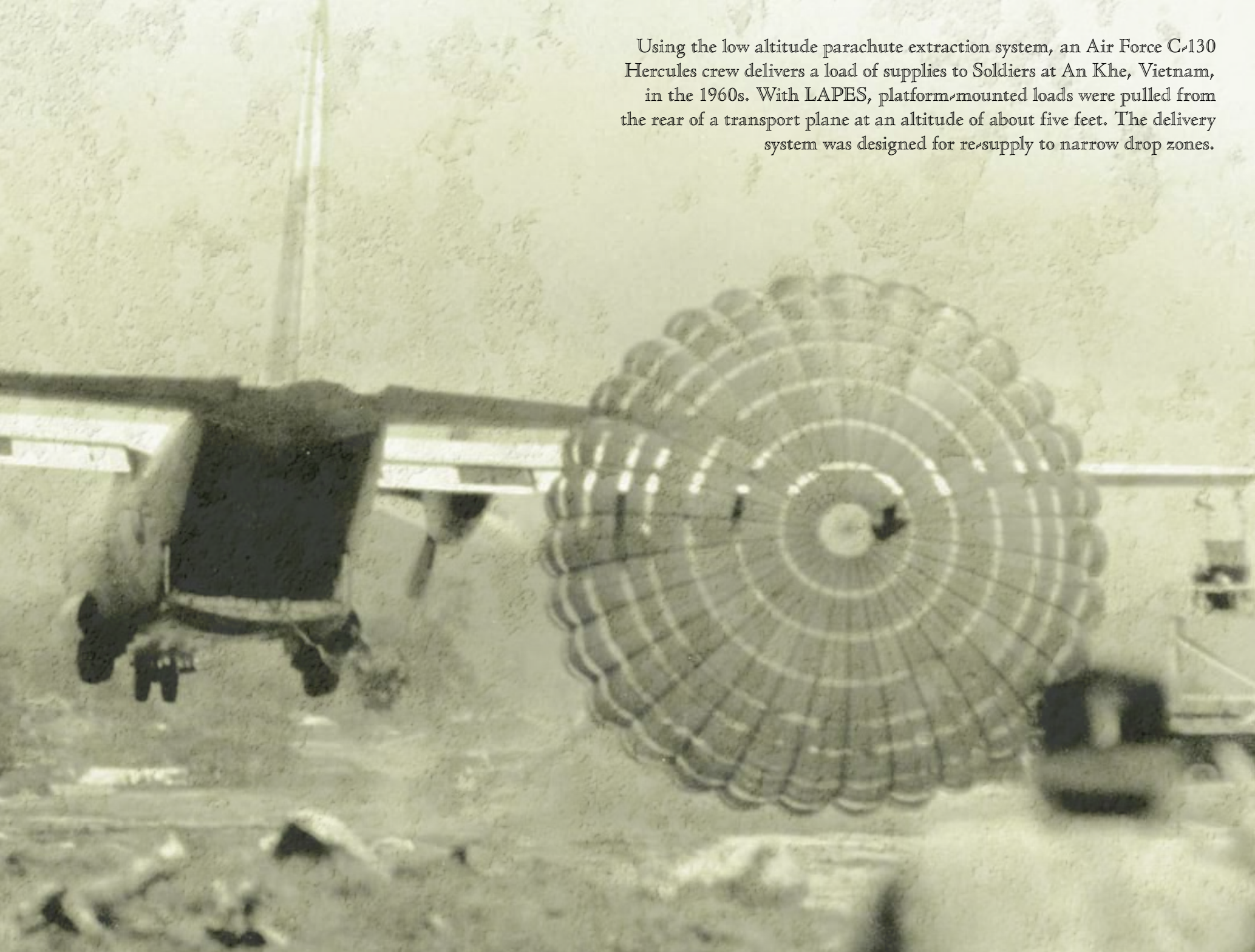
“The Cuban Missile Crisis was the high point of the Cold War,” said the colonel, who entered the Air Force in 1942 and retired in 1974. “The threats and counter threats culminated into a very dangerous crisis where missiles were aimed at our country that could’ve reached as far as Chicago and New England. It brought everything to a head,” he said.

The Cold War era encompassed the mid-1940s to the early 1990s. The rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union included military might, a race to space, espionage, technological development and a nuclear arms race.





Using the low altitude parachute extraction system, an Air Force C-130 Hercules crew delivers a load of supplies to Soldiers at An Khe, Vietnam, in the 1960s. With LAPES, platform-mounted loads were pulled from the rear of a transport plane at an altitude of about five feet. The delivery system was designed for re-supply to narrow drop zones.







**"The wingman is absolutely indispensable. I look after the wingman. The wingman looks after me. It's another set of eyes protecting you. That's the defensive part. Offensively, it gives you a lot more firepower. We work together. We fight together. The wingman knows what his responsibilities are, and knows what mine are. Wars are not won by individuals. They're won by teams."**

**Lt. Col. Francis S. "Gabby" Gabreski, Air Force Ace in World War II and Korea**



At Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, in 1952, a Women in the Air Force officer candidate salutes proudly.

On March 23, 1951, paratroopers from the 187th Regimental Combat Team float earthward from C-119J Flying Boxcars to cut off retreating enemy units south of Munsan, South Korea.







In October 1952, F-84G Thunderjets of the 27th Fighter Escort Wing fly over an Air Force C-124 Globemaster II at a Japan Air Defense Force base in northern Japan. The F-84s flew 7,800 miles from their home base to Japan and set a new record for over-water flight by single-engine fighter aircraft. They flew the last 2,575 miles of their trip using in-flight refueling.



From left, retired Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker, the first American Fighter Ace of World War I, meets Capt. James Jabara, the first American Jet Ace in history. The two men met in the office of Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, then Air Force Chief of staff, on May 31, 1951.

### **July 26, 1947:**

President Harry S. Truman signed the National Defense Act of 1947 to establish the U. S. Air Force as a separate service. Additionally, an Air National Guard is established as a reserve component of the Air Force.

### **Sept. 18, 1947**

W. Stuart Symington was sworn in as the first Secretary of the Air Force. His appointment effectively transferred all air activities from the Army to the new Air Force, and thus Sept. 18 is officially recognized as the Air Force's birthday.

### **Oct. 14, 1947**

Air Force test pilot Capt. Charles "Chuck" Yeager became the first pilot to exceed the speed of sound, attaining Mach 1.06, 700 mph.

### **June 26, 1948**

The Berlin Airlift began.

### **Sept. 30, 1949**

The Berlin Airlift ended.

### **March 15, 1950**

The Joint Chiefs of Staff gave the Air Force responsibility for all strategic-guided missiles.

### **June 30, 1950**

President Truman authorized Army Gen. Douglas MacArthur, commander of United Nations forces in South Korea, to dispatch air forces against targets in North Korea.

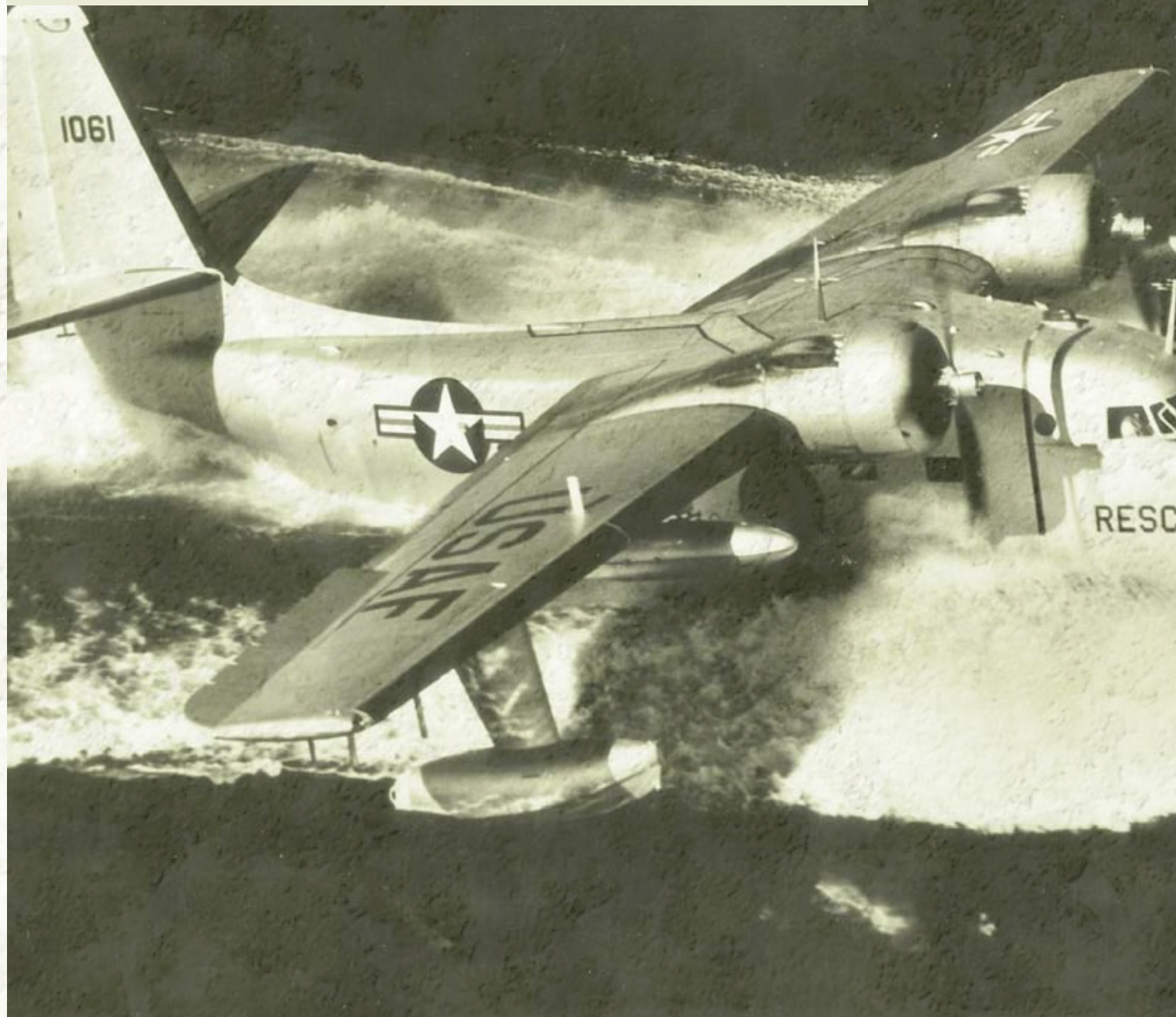




**"Airpower alone does not guarantee America's security, but I believe it best exploits the nation's greatest asset — our technical skill."**

**Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, second Air Force Chief of Staff, retired from active duty June 30, 1953, and died 10 months later on April 2, 1954.**

The white water froths from the front of an SA-16 Albatross as the pilot pours on the power in preparation for a take-off from a fresh water lake in northern Honshu, Japan, in March 1953. The 3rd Air Rescue Group provided air and sea rescue for military and civilians in that area.







Capt. Joseph McConnell Jr. talks with his crew chief on March 9, 1953. The captain became the 27th Ace of the Korean conflict. Captain McConnell was an F-86 Sabre pilot who was part of the 51st Fighter Interceptor Wing, Suwon Air Base, South Korea.



Airman 2nd Class Frances Courtney furnishes the bugle call of taps for the 3452nd Student Squadron, Women in the Air Force, at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo., on June 23, 1953.

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### **April 18, 1951**

An Aerobee research rocket flew a monkey into space, the first primate in space, from Holloman Air Force Base, N.M. It didn't survive the return to earth.

### **June 8, 1953**

The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds, officially designated the 3600th Air Demonstration Flight, performed at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., for their inaugural flight.

### **March 1, 1954**

In the Marshall Islands, the United States successfully exploded its first hydrogen bomb.

### **April 1, 1954**

President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed into law a bill creating the U.S. Air Force Academy.

### **Jan. 16-18, 1957**

Three B-52 Stratofortresses from the 93rd Bombardment Wing made the world's first nonstop, around-the-world, jet flight in history.





**"Man will never conquer space. He may live in it, but he will never conquer it. The sky above is void and very black, and very hostile."**

**Capt. Joseph Kittinger Jr. to ground controllers while falling 102,800 feet over New Mexico on Aug. 16, 1960.**







Members of a Strategic Air Command combat crew race for their always ready and waiting B-52 Stratofortress. Fifty percent of the SAC bomber and tanker force was on continuous ground alert, ready to be en route to a target within the warning time provided by the Ballistic Missile Early Warning System.



A-1H Skyraiders make a low-level pass over Vietnamese tanks and ground troops during a training exercise somewhere in South Vietnam on Nov. 21, 1963.



The first C-141A Starlifter, delivered to Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., in October 1964, began squadron operations in April 1965.

### May 1, 1960

Central Intelligence Agency pilot Francis Gary Powers was shot down while flying a U-2 during a mission over the Soviet Union. He was exchanged for a Soviet spy in 1961.

### Oct. 1, 1960

The first Ballistic Missile Early Warning System station became operational at Thule, Greenland.

### Jan. 31, 1961

Ham, a chimpanzee, was launched in a Mercury space capsule atop a Redstone booster rocket. He splashed down in the Atlantic Ocean, successfully testing the Mercury life support system.

### Feb. 3, 1961

The Strategic Air Command initiated the Looking Glass program, a 24-hour continuous airborne command post operation. EC-135 Command Post planes and their equipment gave SAC the ability to launch manned bombers and intercontinental ballistic missiles in the event of a nuclear attack.

### July 21, 1961

Capt. Virgil "Gus" Grissom became the second American in space, the first U.S. Air Force astronaut in space.

### June 29, 1962

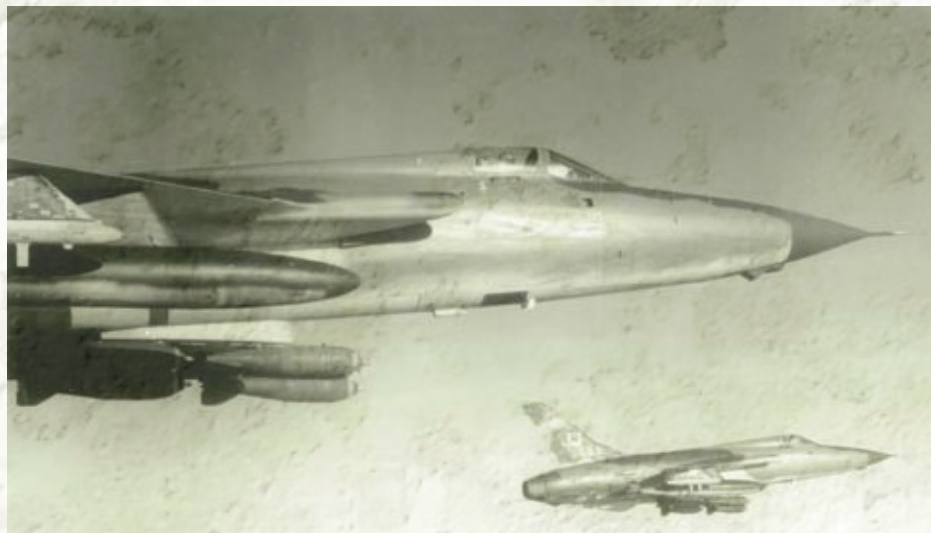
The first Minuteman missile launched by a military crew occurs at Cape Canaveral, Fla.





**"We're going to bomb them back into the Stone Age."**

**Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, Air Force Chief of Staff in 1965, retired that same year and died Oct. 3, 1990.**



F-105 Thunderchiefs of the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing streak toward an enemy target in Southeast Asia in November 1968. The 355th had been striking enemy communication and supply lines in South Vietnam during that time.



On July 18, 1970, UH-1 Huey helicopter hovers above Vietnamese Air Force personnel of the 211th Helicopter Squadron on a combat assault in the Mekong Delta area of Vietnam.



Airman 1st Class Lonnie J. Evans stands guard atop one of the sentry towers posted along the perimeter at Nha Trang Air Base, South Vietnam, in December 1967.

A-1E Skyraiders from the 34th Tactical Group, based at Bien Hoa, South Vietnam, fly in formation over South Vietnam on their way to a target on June 25, 1965.





**Oct. 15 – 28, 1962**

The Cuban Missile Crisis began and lasted 13 days. Air Force reconnaissance photos revealed Soviet missile sites under construction.

**March 2, 1965**

Operation Rolling Thunder, a sustained air campaign against the North Vietnamese, began. It lasted three-and-one-half years.

**Jan. 2, 1967**

Col. Robin Olds, the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing commander, shot down a MiG and became the only Air Force Ace with aerial victories in World War II and the Vietnam War.

**April 3, 1967**

Paul Airey became the first chief master sergeant of the Air Force.

**July 8, 1969**

The first troops were withdrawn from Vietnam under President Richard Nixon's policy of "Vietnamization."

**July 20, 1969**

Man landed on the moon.

**March 15, 1970**

All U.S. military bases were connected by phone when the overseas part of the automatic voice network, called Autovon, was connected.





**"Anybody who doesn't have fear is an idiot. It's just that you must make the fear work for you. Hell, when somebody shot at me, it made me madder than hell, and all I wanted to do was shoot back."**

**Brig. Gen. Robin Olds, Air Force Ace with aerial victories in World War II and the Vietnam War. Retired in 1973 and died June 14, 2007.**

A view from an HH-53 Jolly Green Giant as seen from the gunner's position in the search-and-rescue helicopter.







Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller and Gen. George S. Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, attend an evening meeting on April 28, 1975, with the National Security Council to discuss the evacuation of Saigon.



Capt. Richard "Steve" Ritchie is pictured beside his aircraft in South Vietnam in 1972, following the mission where he became the first Ace in the Vietnam War.

### **July 16, 1971**

Jeanne Holm became the first female general officer in the Air Force.

### **May 10, 1972**

Operation Linebacker I began. It ended on Oct. 23, 1972.

### **April 29 - 30, 1975**

The last Americans, 10 Marines from the embassy, departed Saigon, ending U.S. presence in Vietnam.

### **Sept. 1, 1975**

Daniel "Chappie" James Jr. is elevated to the rank of general, the first African American four-star general in American military history.

### **Nov. 29, 1975**

The first "Red Flag" began at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. Recognizing that combat experience increases the chances of survival in wartime, this realistic training exercise provided an initial margin of "combat" for American aviators. Today, "Red Flag" offers both combined and joint training. Recently, "Cope Thunder," held in Alaska annually, was renamed "Red Flag-Alaska."





**"... the important thing is not that I am black, but that I did a good job as a scientist and an astronaut. There will be black astronauts flying in later missions ... and they, too, will be people who excel, not simply who are black ... who can ably represent their people, their communities, their country."**

**Col. Guion "Guy" Bluford Jr. to the Philadelphia Inquirer of his shuttle flights into space. Colonel Bluford, an Air Force pilot, became an astronaut in 1979 and was the first African American to fly to space in 1983.**



Col. Daniel "Chappie" James, left, meets with other Air Force staff members in the Pentagon. On Sept. 1, 1975, Colonel James was promoted to general, the first African American four-star general in American military history.



Air Force Reserve Capt. Paul Brake, a C-5 Galaxy aircraft commander assigned to the 68th Airlift Squadron, 433rd Airlift Wing, Kelly Air Force Base, Texas, sits in the pilot's position during a flight to Armenia. The C-5 and its crew delivered a fire truck, ambulance, utility vehicle, food and blankets for the people of Tbilisi, Georgia, under provisions of the Denton Amendment program. The exact date of the photograph is unknown.



An HH-53C Super Jolly Green Giant helicopter hovers above the ground as two crewmen rappel from it by a cable during the Boy Scouts of America 1981 National Aviation Explorer Fly-In.





Tech. Sgt. Donald Tolly, an Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., gunsmith, sights in an M-16 rifle for the Edwards team during the 1977 Worldwide Security Police Marksmanship Matches.

### **Aug. 12, 1977**

Two Air Force pilots made the first glide test of the Space Shuttle "Enterprise" at the Dryden Flight Research Center at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.

### **Feb. 22, 1978**

The first Global Positioning System satellite, NAVSTAR, is launched into orbit atop an Atlas F booster rocket.

### **Dec. 8-9, 1978**

After the collapse of the Shah of Iran's government, Air Force C-5 Galaxies and C-141 Starlifters evacuated some 900 people from Tehran.

### **May 18 – June 5, 1980**

Mount Saint Helens, Wash., erupted and the Air Force provided humanitarian assistance.

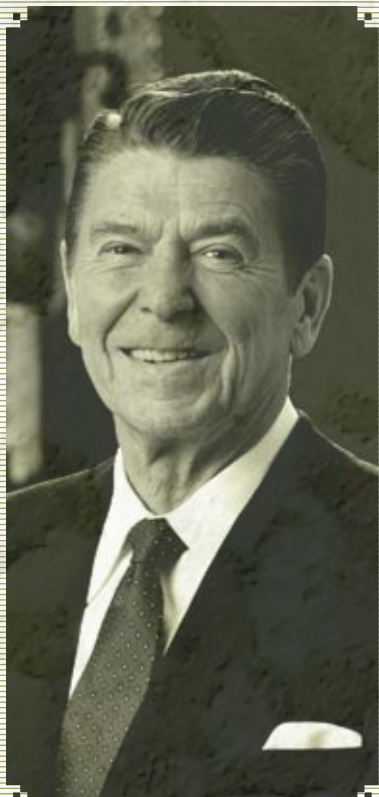
### **Oct. 1, 1980**

Operation Elf One, the deployment of E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft and KC-135 Stratotankers to Saudi Arabia, began to better monitor Saudi airspace during the Iran-Iraq War. The operation continued for eight years.

### **Sept. 1, 1982**

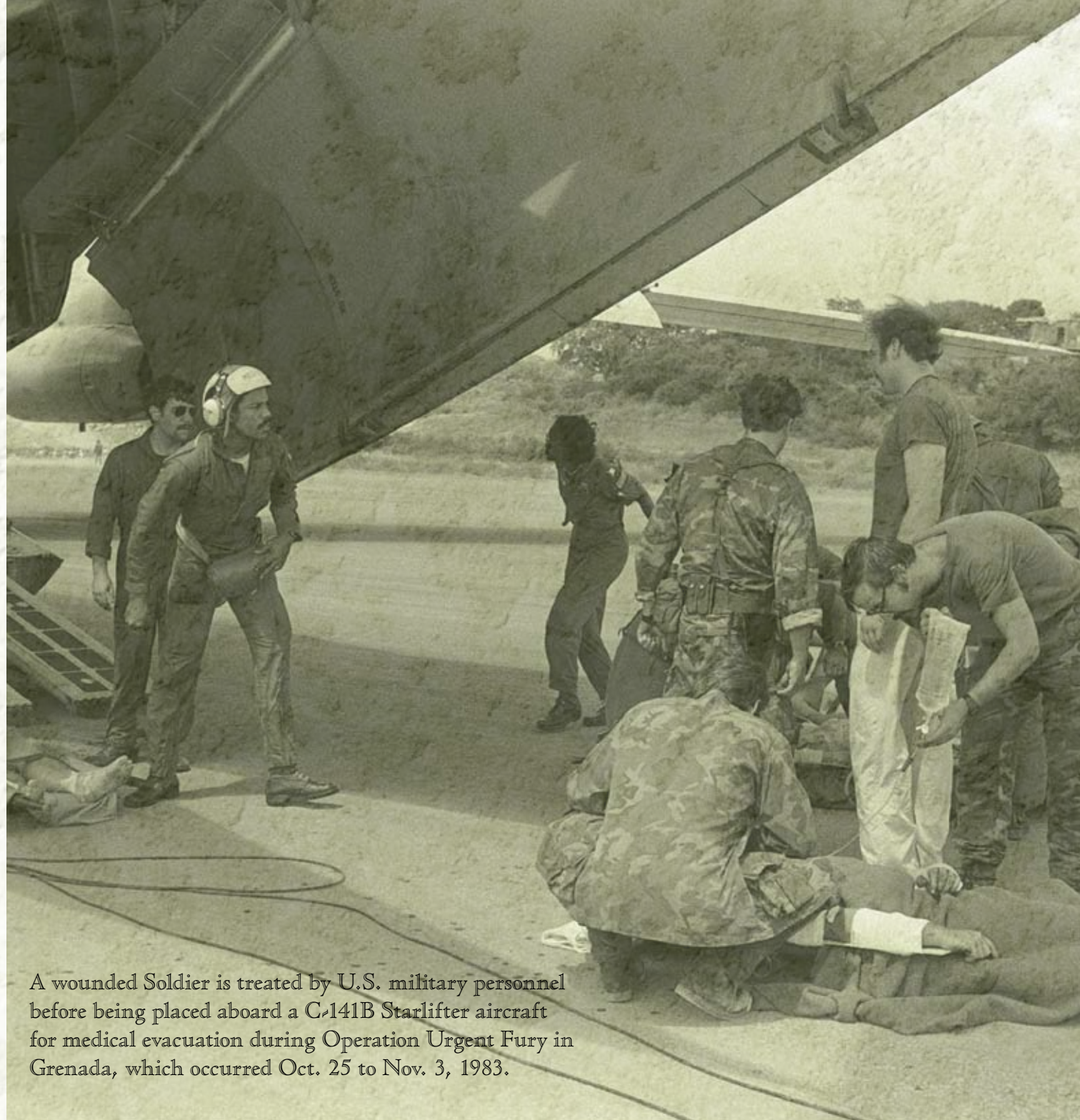
The Air Force Space Command activated at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.





**"General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"**

**President Ronald Reagan,  
remarks at the Brandenburg  
Gate, West Berlin, June 12,  
1987.**



A wounded Soldier is treated by U.S. military personnel before being placed aboard a C-141B Starlifter aircraft for medical evacuation during Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada, which occurred Oct. 25 to Nov. 3, 1983.





Second Lt. Alonzo Babers holds an American flag during the 23rd Olympiad in 1984. Lieutenant Babers won two gold medals at the games, one for the 400-meter race and the other for the 1600-meter relay event.



A pair of T-33 Shooting Star aircraft from the 95th Fighter Interceptor Training Squadron bank left off the wing of a third T-33 on a flight out of Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. The 95th FITS, which was the last active T-33 squadron, phased out the aircraft at the end of 1988.

### March 1983

The Air Force Demonstration Squadron, Thunderbirds, began performances in their newest aircraft, the F-16 Fighting Falcon, the jet they still fly today.

### Oct. 23 – Dec. 9, 1983

After terrorists attack a Marine Corps barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, Military Airlift Command and Air Force Reserve forces transported 239 dead and 95 wounded Americans to the United States and European hospitals for care and burial.

### Oct. 25 – Nov. 3, 1983

Joint American military forces staged Operation Urgent Fury, a raid into Grenada to restore democracy, evacuated medical students and eliminated a hostile Cuban/Soviet base.

### Jan. 28, 1986

The Space Shuttle "Challenger" exploded. All seven crew members were killed, including Air Force Lt. Col. Ellison Onizuka and former Air Force officers, Francis "Dick" Scobee and Gregory Jarvis.

### April 28 - May 7, 1986

Air Weather Service WC-130s gathered details about a nuclear accident at Chernobyl, Soviet Union.